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LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to my letter dated 10 June 1994 (S/1994/693), I would once again urge the Security Council to seriously examine and address the persistent ethnic cleansing campaign in the Banja Luka region, perpetrated by de facto Serbian authorities, which has been continuing without any sign of abating.

According to Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sources, Serb extremists in Banja Luka and its surroundings continue to force non-Serbs to flee the region, while those Serbs opposed to these policies remain helpless to intervene. The Serb de facto authorities have employed a variety of tactics, including:

(a) Murder;

(b) Rape;

(c) Fire-bombings and demolition of houses;

(d) Arbitrary imprisonment usually accompanied by beatings or torture;

(e) Physical intimidation and harassment;

(f) Dismissal from jobs ("only 3 per cent of non-Serbs continue to hold employment within the territories administered by the Bosnian Serbs") (sixth periodic report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia (S/1994/265, annex, appendix, para. 9)).

Of particular concern to my Government is that the hate manifested in ethnic cleansing is being instilled in innocent youths. According to "Information Notes on Former Yugoslavia", No. 5/94 of May 1994, published by the UNHCR Office of the Special Envoy for Former Yugoslavia, "a new problem for Muslims in Vrbanja is Serb children (between 10 and 14 years of age) who now go to school carrying hand-grenades, scaring Muslim children". The international community has offered no response to mitigate these actions, and it is little wonder that less than 9 per cent of the original non-Serb population remains in the area.

Furthermore, according to the Special Rapporteur (S/1994/265), de facto Serb authorities have established a "housing agency" which forcibly evicts non-Serbs from their homes or apartments and introduces Serb settlers to the vacated premises. Independent international observers verify that many of these settlers are from Serbia and Montenegro proper, reaffirming the conclusion of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that "links existed between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Serbian militias and paramilitary groups responsible for massive, gross and systematic violations of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatian territories controlled by Serbs" (A/48/18, para. 537) as well as the observation contained in the final report of the Commission of Experts that "JNA and the Army of the so-called 'Bosnian Serb Republic' have been involved in carrying out and facilitating the policy and practices of 'ethnic cleansing' in certain parts of the territory" (S/1994/674, annex, para. 141 (a)).

While these practices are obviously in gross violation of relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as well as the Geneva Conventions, the international community should be careful not to overlook that allowing these practices to continue directly jeopardizes chances for a settlement in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These actions are in clear violation of the 8 June cease-fire, brokered by the United Nations and solemnly agreed to by my Government and Dr. Karadzic. It is difficult to expect a successful conclusion of the negotiating process while, concurrent with it, clear-cut crimes against humanity are being committed. We would again urge the Security Council to take measures, including the establishment of an international presence and/or a fact-finding mission in the region, either independently or in coordination with relevant regional organizations to put an end to these abhorrent practices.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative